

A DEVICE FOR REDUCING JET ENGINE EXHAUST NOISE USING
OSCILLATING JETS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to an apparatus for reducing jet engine exhaust noise, and more particularly to using oscillating jets to reduce jet engine exhaust noise.

[0002] The reduction of engine noise generated by jet aircraft engines is becoming an important aspect of jet engine design. This is true in both commercial and military applications, where the reduction of noise has obvious benefits. Additionally, the reduction of noise is beneficial to increasing the operational life of a jet engine and engine components because noise can contribute to the wear and sonic fatigue of engine components.

[0003] Various methods have been developed to decrease jet aircraft engine noise. However, these methods are not without their disadvantages. For example, chevrons and other geometric modifications have been employed in engine exhaust systems to enhance the mixing of the jet engine exhaust flow to reduce noise. However, these methods typically result in engine performance penalties, including thrust reduction and adverse effects on specific fuel consumption. These penalties are compounded by the fact that these mechanical devices require additional components and moving parts which add cost, weight and complexity to the engine. Further, many of these systems permanently exist in the engine exhaust system and cannot be turned off, or otherwise deactivated, when they are not needed.

[0004] Thus, fluidic devices that can be used in jet engine exhaust systems, which require no additional moving parts or complex systems, and can be turned off when noise suppression is not needed, are desirable.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] In an embodiment, oscillating jets are placed at a trailing edge lip of a jet aircraft engine exhaust nozzle to enhance the mixing of jet engine exhaust. An oscillating jet, which can also be referred to as a flip-flop jet, is a passive system in the engine exhaust system. The oscillating jet has a nozzle with a triangular shaped orifice and an exhaust pipe, through which the stream of mixing gas passes. The oscillating jet introduces an oscillating stream of a gas into the engine exhaust. The oscillating stream of gas interacts with the jet engine exhaust shear layers and enhances the mixing of the engine exhaust shear layers. This mixing creates a fluidic chevron, which results in the overall reduction of the jet engine exhaust noise, while avoiding the need for a complex control system or a significant number of moving parts.

[0006] The oscillating stream of gas is created passively by using high pressure gas extracted from upstream turbomachinery equipment from the engine. The triangular orifice, in combination with the exhaust pipe, of the oscillating jet, creates flow instabilities that provides the oscillation to the stream of gas without the need of any extra power, or moving parts. The oscillating stream of gas is introduced into the engine exhaust gases near the exit of the engine exhaust gases from the exhaust nozzle of the engine.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] The advantages, nature and various additional features of the invention will appear more fully upon consideration of the illustrative embodiment of the invention which is schematically set forth in the figures, in which:

[0008] FIG. 1 is a diagrammatical representation of an exhaust portion of a jet aircraft engine with an oscillating jet positioned on the nozzle lip of the engine exhaust.

[0009] FIG. 2 is a diagrammatical representation of an exhaust portion of a jet aircraft engine with an oscillating jet positioned in the nozzle lip of the engine exhaust.

[0010] FIG. 3 is a diagrammatical representation of an exhaust portion of an engine with an oscillating jet similar to the one depicted in FIG. 1, having a flow control valve located upstream from the oscillating jet.

[0011] FIG. 4 is a diagrammatical representation of an aircraft jet engine equipped with oscillating jets.

[0012] FIG. 5 is an diagrammatical representation of an asymmetric, cross-sectional view of an oscillating jet.

[0013] FIG. 6 is a diagrammatical representation of a lateral cross-section of an oscillating jet.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0014] The present invention will be explained in further detail by making reference to the accompanying drawings, which do not limit the scope of the invention in any way.

[0015] FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional side view of a portion of a jet aircraft engine 10 including an oscillating jet 12, positioned according to an embodiment of the invention. FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional side view of a portion of a jet aircraft engine 10 including an oscillating jet 12, positioned according to another embodiment of the invention. FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional side view of a portion of a jet aircraft engine 10, similar to that shown in FIG. 1, where a flow control valve is located upstream of the oscillating jet 12. FIG. 4 shows an aircraft engine 10 with an oscillating jet 12 positioned in the exhaust portion 16 of the engine 10. FIG. 5 is an asymmetric, cross-sectional view of an oscillating jet 12, and FIG. 6 is a lateral cross-sectional view of an oscillating jet 12.

[0016] In the jet aircraft engine 10, the jet engine exhaust gas 14 passes through the engine exhaust portion 16 in a direction indicated by the arrow, past an aft lip 18 of the jet engine exhaust portion 16. On an external surface of the jet engine exhaust portion 16 a number of oscillating jets 12 are positioned. It is noted that in FIGs 1, 2 and 3 only a single jet 12 is shown for simplicity.

[0017] In one embodiment, the oscillating jets 12 are positioned symmetrically along the perimeter of the lip 18 of the jet engine exhaust portion 16. Other embodiments include positioning the oscillating jets asymmetrically with respect to the exhaust portion 16. The oscillating jets 12 are positioned to enhance mixing at peak noise locations in the engine portion 16. Additionally, the number of oscillating jets 12 employed vary according to the design requirements and limitations of the engine 10. The oscillating jets 12 can also be deployed in clusters with two (2) or more arranged to provide optimal mixing enhancement.

[0018] The oscillating jets 12 mounted on an exterior surface of the exhaust portion 16 are positioned at an angle in the range of about 120 degrees to about 0 degrees with respect to the flow direction of the exhaust gases 14. In one embodiment, the oscillating jets are positioned at an angle of about 30 degrees with respect to the flow direction of the exhaust gases 14. The angle chosen for the oscillating jets 12 optimizes mixing of the oscillating flow, exiting from the oscillating jets 12, with the engine exhaust gases 14 and shear layers to create a fluidic chevron.

[0019] Coupled to the oscillating jets 12 are channels 20 which direct the high pressure gas to the oscillating jets 12. In one embodiment, the high pressure gas is air. Other embodiments could include air seeded with other non-combustible or combustible materials (liquids and solids). The high pressure gas needed to power, or flow through, the oscillating jets 12 is extracted from turbomachinery components positioned upstream from the engine exhaust portion 16, in the engine 10. Alternately, high pressure gas can be provided by dedicated equipment employed for this purpose, if necessary.

[0020] The pressure of the high pressure gas is in the range of about 5 to about 500 PSI. In one embodiment, the pressure of the high pressure gas is about 50 PSI. The pressure of the high pressure gas is selected to ensure sustained oscillation of the gas flow as it exits the oscillating jets 12, to provide mixing with the engine exhaust gases 14.

[0021] In FIG. 2, a portion of an aircraft engine 10 is shown having an oscillating jet 12 positioned within the aft lip 18 of the engine exhaust portion 16. The channels 20 for the oscillating jets 12 are positioned within the structure of the exhaust portion 16.

[0022] In both FIGs. 1 and 2, the exit opening of the oscillating jet 12 is positioned such that the oscillating gas contacts, or begins mixing with, the engine exhaust gas 14 at a point aft of the aft lip 18 of the engine exhaust portion 16. However, in one embodiment the exit opening of the oscillating jet 12 is positioned upstream of the lip 18, such that the oscillating gas begins mixing with the exhaust gases 14 prior to the gases 14 exiting the engine 10. This is shown in FIG. 4. In one embodiment, a combination of the above positioning is used, where some of the oscillating jets 12 are located such that the oscillating gas mixes with the engine exhaust gases 14 aft of the engine lip 18, while other oscillating jets 12 are located such that they exhaust the oscillating gas forward of the engine lip 18.

[0023] FIG. 3 depicts a portion of an engine 10 similar to that shown in FIG.1. However, upstream of the oscillating jet 12, in the channel 20, a flow control valve 28 is positioned to control the flow of high pressure gas in the channel 20 to the oscillating jet 12. The flow control valve 28 controls any one of the flow pressure, flow rate, flow volume, or any combination thereof. This provides a diversity of control regarding the flow of the oscillating gas exiting from the oscillating jet 12, including permitting the flow to be stopped, if desired. The operation of the flow control valve 28 is manual or automatic, or both depending on the design requirements and specifications.

[0024] FIG. 4 shows an aircraft engine 10 with a number of oscillating jets 12 positioned on an outer surface of the exhaust portion 16 of the engine 10. The oscillating jets 12 are coupled to their respective channels 20. In the depiction, the upper channel 20 is coupled to a compressor stage 30, so as to provide high pressure air to the oscillating jet 12 from this stage of the engine 10. The lower channel 20 is coupled to a turbine stage 34, so as to provide high pressure air to the oscillating jet 12 from this stage of the engine 10. As shown, the lower oscillating jet 12 is positioned such that the oscillating gas mixes with the engine exhaust 14 upstream of the lip 18.

[0025] In one embodiment, both of the channels 20 are coupled to the same stage of the engine 10, so as to obtain the high pressure gas from the same engine stage. In another embodiment, the oscillating jets 12 are positioned in the exhaust portion 16 of the engine 10 at the same location, so as to have the oscillating streams from the jets 12 mix with the engine exhaust gases 14 at the same plane in the engine exhaust portion 16. Further, it is noted that although only two oscillating jets 12 are depicted in FIG. 4, in another embodiment there are more than two oscillating jets.

[0026] In yet another embodiment, the channels 20 are coupled to a bypass air portion of the engine (not depicted). Further, in an additional embodiment all of the oscillating jets 12 are coupled to the same source of high pressure gas through a single channel 20.

[0027] In each of the channels 20 a flow control valve 28 is provided to control the flow of high pressure gas to the oscillating jets 12. Additionally, in each of the channels 20 a flow stabilizer 32 is located to stabilize the high pressure gas and aid in providing a uniform flow to the oscillating jets 12. In an embodiment, the flow stabilizers 32 are removed. In another embodiment, the flow stabilizers 32 are located upstream from the flow control valves 28.

[0028] In another embodiment, a combustor or heat source 46 is located upstream of the oscillating jets 12 to increase the pressure and temperature of the gas prior to entering the oscillating jets 12.

[0029] Additionally, in another embodiment of the invention, a liquid spray is introduced into the gas prior to the gas exiting the jet 12. In one embodiment the liquid is water. However, in an alternative embodiment other liquids, including a combustible liquid, are used. The primary purpose of introducing these liquid sprays is to modify the mixing and oscillatory characteristics of the oscillating flow, such that they improve the mixing enhancement of the jet flow. Additionally, a combustible liquid can be used to provide additional thrust for the engine. As the gas and combustible liquid mixture exits the oscillating jets 12, the liquid comes in contact with the engine exhaust and is ignited. In either embodiment, the additional liquid can be added to the gas upstream of the jet 12 or within the structure of the jet 12. The addition of the liquid to the gas flowing through the nozzle 12 is to be such that the oscillation of the gas exiting the nozzle is not to be eliminated.

[0030] In a further embodiment, rather than a liquid, fine solid particles are added to the flow of gas. The solid particles are made of a solid propellant material and are injected into the gas flow either within the oscillating jet 12 or upstream of the jet 12. The size and amount of particles added to the gas flow is such that the oscillating flow of the gas as it exits the oscillating jet is not eliminated.

[0031] FIGs. 5 and 6 show an oscillating jet 12 having a nozzle 22 with a triangular shaped orifice 36 coupled to a cylindrically shaped exhaust pipe 24, from which the oscillating gas 26 exits. In one embodiment, the triangular shaped orifice 36 is an equilateral triangle. At the exit portion of the exhaust pipe 24, a lip 38 is provided having a smaller diameter opening D_L than the diameter D_E of the inner surface of the exhaust pipe 24. The opening in the lip 38 is circular and has a chamfered edge 44. Additionally, the triangular orifice 36 has a chamfered surface 40, to aid the flow of high pressure gas in separating at the upstream face of the orifice 36. In one embodiment, the diameter D_L of the opening in the lip 38 is the

same as the diameter D_E of the inner surface exhaust pipe 24. In another embodiment, the diameter D_L of the lip 38 is about 90% of the diameter D_E of the exhaust pipe 24. Also, in an embodiment of the invention, the chamfer 40 of the triangular orifice is rounded, made square or beveled to optimize flow separation and to control instabilities.

[0032] The triangular orifice 36 has an effective diameter D_{TO} , which is equivalent to a diameter of a circle having the same area as the orifice 36. The nozzle 22 has an internal diameter D_N , and the exhaust pipe 24 has a length L from the upstream surface of the orifice 36 to the downstream surface of the lip 38. The ratio of the exhaust pipe diameter D_E to the effective diameter D_{TO} of the orifice is in the range of about two (2) to about five (5). The ratio of the length L of the exhaust pipe 24 to the diameter D_E of the pipe 24 is in the range of about 1.5 to about four (4). Each of these ratios is optimized with respect to the operational parameters of the oscillating jets 12.

[0033] During operation, the high pressure gas from the channel 20 passes through the nozzle 22 and the triangular orifice 36 and enters the exhaust pipe 24. As the gas 26 exits the exhaust pipe 24, past the lip 38, it is oscillating, so as to maximize mixing of the high pressure gas 26 with the engine exhaust 14 and within the engine exhaust itself.

[0034] According to a particular embodiment, the length L and diameter D_E of exhaust pipe 24 are selected to optimize the oscillation of the oscillating gas 26.

[0035] The nozzle 22, triangular orifice 36, exhaust pipe 24 and channel 20 are made from typical materials used in jet aircraft engines. According to a particular embodiment, the materials are optimized based on the operating conditions and environment of the jets 12. Further, these components are secured to each via welding, fasteners or other suitable methods capable of withstanding the engine 10 operating parameters and pressures. In one embodiment, at least the nozzle 22, orifice 36 and the cylinder 24 are made integrally with each other.

[0036] In another embodiment, the triangular orifice 36 is variable to provide optimization of oscillating flow at various stages and under various flight parameters. In an additional embodiment, the length L of the exhaust pipe 24 is adjustable to provide optimization of oscillating flow at various stages and under various flight parameters. In either embodiment, the variations or adjustments are made either manually or automatically to optimize the oscillating flow at various conditions.

[0037] While the invention has been described in terms of various specific embodiments, those skilled in the art will recognize that the invention can be practiced with modification within the spirit and scope of the claims.